LIFE-FLAREX

Mitigation of environmental impact caused by Flame Retardant textile finishing chemicals studying their non-toxic alternatives

PRESS RELEASE

Terrassa, June 18th 2020

LIFE-FLAREX final event brings together companies and organizations to discuss on alternative flame retardants

LIFE-FLAREX is a LIFE Programme project that aims to reduce the impact on the environment, human health and workers' safety, of current harmful Flame Retardants used in the textile industry and their alternatives, by analyzing their environmental impact and technical functionalities and promoting the best practices for the sector

The LIFE-FLAREX final event was organized remotely on June 17th 2020 and it was organized by FLAREX partnership. The event was highly successful with over 60 participants from across Europe.

The aim of the webinar was to present the advances and alternatives for implementation of chemical substitution policies in the textile industry, particularly on the use of flame retardants for contract home textiles including carpets, upholstery for furniture and other products such as mattresses or curtains.

Invited speakers included representatives from the European Commission (DG Environment), the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME), the European Chemical Agency (ECHA), EURATEX (the European Apparel and Textile Confederation), ChemSec (the International Chemical Secretariat), the Federal Environmental Agency from Germany and LEITAT Technological Center.

The session started with talks from the European Commission representatives. Firstly, DG Environment policy officer presented the upcoming opportunities with EU Green Deal for both textile sector and chemical supplies for the sector. Next, EASME project adviser presented the LIFE program which offers innovative companies financial support to implement sustainability strategies including chemical substitution and circular economy.

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EURATEX then presented the industrial point of view on chemical substitution within the textile sector, particularly the need of derogations for essential uses such as personal protective equipment where no technical alternatives are available and the functionality is required for safety.

The next presentation from ECHA described the ongoing policy work, information platforms for chemical substitution, and trends for substitution of perfluorochemical compounds used for water and oil repellency. Several Member States are pushing forward a generalized ban on C6 chemistries.

ChemSec presented the different tools available for textile companies to promote substitution including the SIN list, the chemical alternatives' marketplace and the newly released ChemScore.

After the introductory presentations, the different partners from LIFE-FLAREX consortium presented the major outcomes of the project, including the technical results, the in-vitro toxicological assessment, the risk assessment, the life cycle assessment and the policy recommendations.

The LIFE-FLAREX team assessed four different contract home textiles' applications: upholstery, curtains, bed linen and mattress ticking. For each application, a set of alternative products were assessed and benchmarked against industry standard products (conventional). For each application, at least one alternative was found to have lowered environmental impact, cost and good technical performance.

The webinar ended with the presentation of two related LIFE projects: AskReach, which is developing a consumer app to identify if a product has used any substance of very high concern along its production, and MIDWOR-LIFE, which assessed alternative finishing products for water and oil repellency.

The LIFE-FLAREX team has published the different presentations and the recording of the webinar in the project website.

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Webinar screenshot

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The project coordinator is AEI TÈXTILS, the Catalan cluster of technical textiles. Six additional partners complete the consortium: two Spanish technological centers/research institutes: LEITAT and the Institute of Advanced Chemistry of Catalonia (CSIC), both members of AEI TÈXTILS, the Belgian textile research center CENTEXBEL and three technical textile clusters: ATEVAL from Spain, POINTEX from Italy and CLUTEX from the Czech Republic.

LIFE-FLAREX's objective is to reduce the impact on the environment, human health and workers' safety, of the current flame retardants used in the textile sector, and their future alternatives, by identifying which are the best technologies available, both from the performance and from the sustainability point of view. This will be achieved with the development of the analysis of their environmental impact and functionalities in order to promote the substitution amongst the manufacturers.

For more information: www.life-flarex.eu